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New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Majesty Hassan II, late King of Morocco

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This afternoon, it is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late King of the Kingdom of Morocco, His Majesty Hassan II, who passed away on 23 July 1999.

With his physical disappearance, Morocco has lost a leader who was able to consolidate the independence of his country, ensure political stability during his reign and establish the foundations of its economic and social development. The world, and his region in particular, mourn the loss of this statesman who, with his tireless efforts, helped to create conditions conducive to peace and harmony in the Middle East.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of Morocco to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Morocco and to the bereaved family of His Majesty Hassan II.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Majesty Hassan II.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: It is entirely fitting that the General Assembly should interrupt its proceedings as a mark of respect for the memory of the late King Hassan II. I am deeply honoured to share with members this moment of sadness and of gratitude for the life of a great man, as I was honoured to attend His Majesty's funeral in Rabat three days ago.

King Hassan II's devotion to peace, both within his country and in the wider region, was known all over the world. In an age of bitter conflict between Arabs and Jews, this was one Arab ruler who never lost the esteem of his Jewish subjects and who was always at the forefront of efforts to forge a new relationship with Israel based on peace, dialogue and mutual respect.

In an age when many people wrongly identified Muslims with anger and violence, he showed the world the true face of Islam — a face of wisdom, tolerance and moderation. He was a wise man, a refined politician and a remarkable diplomat. I am proud to remember him as a personal friend and I shall miss him very much.

He died at a moment of hopeful change in the region. I regret especially that he has not lived to see a peaceful resolution of the issue of Western Sahara, on which he and I worked closely together. But I have every hope that we shall be able to complete that work with his successor, King Mohamed VI, to whom I am sure we all send our most sincere condolences as well as our heartfelt good wishes for a long and successful reign.

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The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Zimbabwe, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Muchetwa (Zimbabwe): On 23 July 1999, the people of Africa received the terrible news of the passing away of King Hassan II of Morocco. On this solemn occasion, and on behalf of the African Group, I wish to convey to His Majesty Mohamed VI, King of Morocco, to his entire family and, indeed, to the people of Morocco my heartfelt condolences.

As Africa will remember, the life of King Hassan II was that of a distinguished statesman, a man of honour, dignity, courage and understanding. Africa will also remember King Hassan II as a founding father of the Organization of African Unity and a man who genuinely believed in Africa's enduring struggle for peace, unity and stability. Indeed, Africa will miss King Hassan II forever.

May Allah rest his soul in peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States to convey our deep sorrow at the death of King Hassan II of Morocco. In the face of this immense loss, I cannot find the words to describe the great qualities of the late king. His death was an act of God; God chose that the king should be with Him.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Asian Group, I extend our heartfelt condolences to King Mohamed VI, to the other members of the royal family, and to the Government and the people of fraternal Morocco.

Departing for the afterworld is something we must all face, but when we speak of the departure of His Majesty, we are talking about the departure of a great man who participated in the liberation struggle of his people to win independence and end colonization. King Hassan II sought education within his country and abroad, and became a legal expert and a great leader of his people following the passing of his father, King Mohamed V.

History will remember the pioneering role of King Hassan II, the role he played in winning the independence of his country in 1956 and in the evacuation of foreign bases in 1960. History will remember that he led his country on the path of spiritual and material development. Under his leadership, Morocco enjoyed great prestige in the world at various international levels, including diplomacy. In that context, many Arab and Islamic summit conferences were held in Morocco. The late king had solid, excellent relations with all, based on mutual respect, including countries in Asia and throughout the world, and, in particular, with the United Nations.

The international family will always remember that King Hassan II stood firmly on the side of right and justice and against occupation, racism, racial discrimination and apartheid. In the Arab context, King Hassan II worked to strengthen Arab solidarity and unity, playing an effective role in establishing the Arab Maghreb Union and supporting the Middle East peace process. In all the positions he adopted, he insisted on the need for complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan and from southern Lebanon, and he always supported the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their lands and their inalienable rights. In that context, let us recall that until his death King Hassan II was the Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, charged by the Organization of the Islamic Conference to defend the Arab and Islamic identity of Jerusalem, to prevent the loss of that identity and to restore Jerusalem to its legitimate owners, the Palestinian people.

When in view of his 38 years at the helm of Morocco the late king was asked about the qualities of a leader, he said that what was necessary was the ability to face a challenge. Here, the representatives of the international community pay tribute to the achievements of the late king in challenging backwardness and achieving progress, in challenging a difficult economic situation and achieving prosperity and dignity for the people of Morocco, and in challenging injustice and achieving independence and sovereignty for Morocco.

I wish in conclusion to reiterate the deep sorrow and pain of the Group of Asian States at the departure of King Hassan II. He will be sorely missed in the Arab and the Islamic worlds and in the international community. We share with King Mohamed VI, his family, his Government and the people of Morocco their feelings of deep sadness, and we ask God Almighty to grant peace to the soul of King Hassan II and to afford him his rightful place in paradise, and to care for His Majesty Mohamed VI, for the sake of the Moroccan people, of the Arab and Islamic worlds and of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Azerbaijan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): The whole world mourns the death of King Hassan II of Morocco. His death has aroused in us feelings of tremendous sorrow and loss. King Hassan II was a great man and a wise ruler of his State. He was a far-sighted politician and an outstanding statesman who shouldered responsibility for the destiny of his people and of other peoples of the region. As the leader of a country situated at the convergence of two continents, he turned Morocco into a bridge of understanding and cooperation between Europe and Africa, between different religions and traditions. His life was devoted to improving the lives of his people and to the development of his country. His active presence on the international scene and his authority made it possible to discuss and resolve many extremely important problems relating not only to the Middle East but also to the entire world.

He was a great teacher and an advocate of peace, mutual understanding and tolerance. His contribution to peace-building and to the establishment of a spirit of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance constitutes an integral part of his invaluable legacy.

On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I should like to express our condolences to the King's family and to the Government and people of Morocco. On this sad day for us all, we pay tribute to the memory of His Highness King Hassan II. There is no doubt that his memory will remain forever in our hearts as an eternal source of inspiration for those fighting for lofty ideals.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegations members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, it is my sad duty to convey to the people, the Government and the royal family of Morocco our solidarity and our sincerest condolences on the death of His Majesty King Hassan II.

Only five years after his country's independence, the then young Head of State faced the difficult task of consolidating Morocco's political, economic and social institutions. He took many risks, including personal ones, but succeeded, with determination and talent, in laying the foundations for stability and the prosperity of his people.

The 38 years of the reign of King Hassan II included countless examples of his universal mission. His intelligence, resolve and political vision brought Morocco to a privileged place in the concert of nations. For King Hassan II, peace and security in the Middle East were not just a chimera. With a sense of realism but also with great far-sightedness, he spared no effort to formulate initiatives or to serve as a mediator at decisive moments, even in the midst of the most acute crises. His insistence on dialogue, tolerance and understanding is today an integral part of the important progress made on the long and difficult path to peace in that region.

The political and cultural openness of King Hassan II was the guiding principle and a reflection of the profound democratic conviction of the people of Morocco. His leadership made it possible to modernize his country politically and harmoniously to blend the rich and valuable legacy of his forebears with the legitimate aspirations of its people on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

King Hassan II left his country a legacy of stability and prosperity. The international community inherited his multilateral mission and the legacy of a forward-looking statesman committed to the most lofty ideals of the international community.

King Hassan II gave evidence in word and in deed of the strong and profound commitment of Morocco to the San Francisco Charter and to the norms of international law. We will continue to share with Morocco our common aspirations for a peaceful, democratic and free world based on firmer foundations of economic and social development.

The delegations of the States members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States wish to offer to His Majesty Mohamed VI dialogue, cooperation and friendship. We wish him a long life replete with personal achievements and peace, as well as stability and development for his country, the Middle East and all the peoples represented in the United Nations.

In concluding, may I, through you, Sir, request the delegation of Morocco to convey to the people, to the Government and to the royal family of Morocco the sentiments that I have just expressed on behalf of the States members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

May His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco rest in peace.

Mr. Kaskarelis (Greece): In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States, I would like to express, on behalf of all of its member States, my heartfelt condolences to His Majesty King Mohamed VI as well as to the royal family, the Government and the people of Morocco on the tragic loss of King Hassan II, a leading State figure.

The Arab world is mourning the loss of one of its wisest and most experienced leaders. The tragic news has also deeply saddened the international community, for during his long reign he tried hard to promote reconciliation in the Middle East, to bridge the historic gap between the West and the Islamic world, and to balance opposing forces for the benefit of the region.

For the Middle East this is an especially great loss, given the King's tireless efforts to create a climate of confidence within the area and among the parties concerned. The Arab world will always remember him as a discreet but key mediator in the region's complex problems who, accepted by all sides, fought fervently for their peaceful and lasting solution. He played a pivotal role in bringing about advances in the peace process, and his low-profile involvement contributed to the Camp David agreements.

In addition, King Hassan worked continuously to forge closer links between the North African countries, while his inexhaustible efforts in favour of peace and reconciliation among all the peoples of the Mediterranean facilitated the creation of the basis for the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue.

King Hassan was a tireless worker, a man of great warmth and personal involvement, and a distinguished jurist. Nevertheless, throughout his long reign his main characteristic was wisdom. Having had an education combining tradition and modernity as well as training based on Arab-Islamic values and the principles of universal civilization, he placed particular emphasis on developing a dialogue between believers of different faiths, playing the role, as he said, of "teacher and defender of the values common to the Islamic and Christian faiths".

King Hassan used to say, "When I ascended the throne, people said I would not last more than six months." He ruled for almost four decades, a fact that speaks for itself. His enlightened policies played a critical role in bringing about a new era in Morocco. He pushed hard for his nation's greater development, prosperity and stability. Thanks to his actions, his country is playing a dynamic and constructive role within major international and regional organizations. He paved the way for a democratic and modern Morocco, while his personal popularity among his people was acknowledged even by his political opponents. Thus he realized a long-held vision of greater unity in his country.

Morocco has lost a great and subtle statesman and an accomplished political builder, who, with skill and adroitness, prepared his country to face the challenging problems of the new millennium. The international community will always remember King Hassan II with great esteem.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Peter Burleigh, to speak for the host country.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): My Government was deeply saddened by the passing of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco.

For almost four decades, King Hassan was a great friend of the United States and of peace in the Middle East. Today, as we offer our sympathy to His Majesty King Mohamed VI and the people of Morocco, we mourn the passing of a visionary leader and pay tribute to a noble life.

The King devoted his life to improving the lives of the Moroccan people. He worked tirelessly for national reconciliation and for the promotion of regional stability and development. As Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, the King was "a pioneer of the Middle East peace process" and "an enlightened promoter of religious tolerance and understanding".

King Hassan's support and wise counsel will long be remembered by my grateful Government. President Clinton, upon learning of the King's passing, called him a partner and friend. The King will be truly missed, but his efforts in the name of peace will not be forgotten.

We stand with our Moroccan friends in this time of mourning and pledge to continue our mutual efforts to enhance the prosperity of the Moroccan people and bring lasting peace and stability to the Middle East.

We offer our thoughts and prayers to the family, friends and countrymen of King Hassan. We dedicate ourselves anew, at the time of his death, to the path of

peace he followed in his life. We wish His Majesty King Mohamed VI wise counsel on the path ahead.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): On behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement I stand to salute the life of King Hassan of Morocco. King Hassan was a person who loved freedom. He loved freedom not only for his own people, who enjoyed multi-party democracy; he so loved freedom that he supported those in need of freedom.

In the Middle East King Hassan was a catalyst for change. He was a midwife for what came to be known as the Camp David process. He played a forceful role in helping move along the peace process in the Middle East.

But my people in South Africa shall always remember King Hassan as the one who remembered us when we were in the depths of apartheid. And not only did he remember us in our darkest days, but when our democracy began standing to take its first steps, King Hassan and the people of Morocco were always there to support us.

Beyond the matters of the day King Hassan was a holy man, a spiritual person. As a descendent of the prophet Mohammed and as a protector of the faith, he was well respected in the Muslim world, and those of us in the Christian world respected him too.

As we stand at the dawn of a new millennium, a millennium that will demand men and women of courage, men and women of incorruptible leadership, it is a sad loss for us to now lose King Hassan. On this day we mourn with the people of Morocco. We would be honoured if the delegation of Morocco could convey in all its Africanness the feelings that we feel, not only as people of Africa but as people of the world, people of the Non-Aligned Movement, the feelings of those of us who believe — among many, many things — that it will take peace, it will take development, it will take people living together as human beings for this world to become a better place.

We in the Non-Aligned Movement are honoured to have counted King Hassan among us.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Adam (Israel): The people and the Government of Israel have received with deep sorrow the news about the death of King Hassan II of the Kingdom of Morocco. King Hassan was a man of peace, honour and respect. He contributed endless efforts to the work of peace in the Middle East. Over the years he met Israeli leaders with mutual honour and discretion. He always respected and cherished the Moroccan Jewry, and the Jewish Moroccan community in Israel loved him back. They are mourning now along with all the citizens of Israel the death of the King.

May the flag of peace and understanding, which King Hassan raised, continue to be raised high above the peoples of the region.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Deputy Permanent Representative of Morocco, Mr. Elhassane Zahid.

Mr. Zahid (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): The Moroccan delegation was greatly moved as it listened to the feeling homage paid to the late sovereign, His Majesty King Hassan II, by the international community that this Assembly represents.

The observation of a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Majesty King Hassan II — may God rest his soul — the sincere and profound condolences addressed to His Majesty King Mohamed Ben Al Hassan, the royal family and the Government and people of Morocco, as well as all the expressions of regret, sorrow, sadness, sympathy and grief, bear witness to the great prestige of the late sovereign, His Majesty King Hassan II, and the respect and admiration which he enjoyed. He devoted his entire reign to the social and economic development of Morocco, to building democratic institutions and to efforts to achieve peace and rapprochement among peoples and nations, in particular in the Middle East.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has described this great endeavour of the late sovereign, His Majesty King Hassan II, stating that he

> "brought his people into the modern age while upholding respect and reverence for its ancient and glorious Islamic and Maghrebi traditions. By serving as a bridge of peace between different nations and cultures, King Hassan made Morocco itself a bridge of understanding and cooperation

between Europe and Africa, North and South, East and West."

For his part, the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization referred to the death of King Hassan II as a great loss for humanity.

Such testimony, and the words that we have heard this afternoon, have been added to the thousands — indeed, the hundreds of thousands — of others expressed to the people and Kingdom of Morocco and to its king by those who wished to express their sincere condolences and solidarity and to offer comfort.

On behalf of the delegation of Morocco, I should like to express to you, Mr. President, to the Secretary-General and to all those who have spoken, our sincere gratitude for all of the expressions of condolence offered to His Majesty King Mohamed Ben Al Hassan, to the royal family and to the Moroccan people. We will pass on all of those expressions of condolence. I should also like to thank you, Mr. President, and all of those who spoke, for the wishes for success addressed to His Majesty King Mohamed Ben Al Hassan, and for the solidarity expressed to the Moroccan people who are mourning the sudden death of the father of the nation, leader of the faithful, His Majesty King Hassan II.

At this time, which is very sad for all of us, we implore the Almighty to grant the late sovereign, His Majesty King Hassan II, His infinite mercy, and to receive him into His everlasting paradise to dwell with the prophets, apostles, martyrs and saints.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 113, 118 and 170.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that:

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/485/Add.6)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Outline of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 for the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 113.

Before continuing with the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to inform representatives that we have not yet received any response with regard to the

programme of work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform. As soon as I have any information, I will inform the Assembly.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/464/Add.5)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution I, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/36 F).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", without a vote.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/36 G).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Finland, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position on resolution 53/36 G, just adopted.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): Let me at the outset also express, on behalf of the people of Finland and the European Union, my heartfelt condolences to the family of King Hassan II and the people of Morocco at this sad moment of their great loss.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries members of the European Economic Area (EEA) — Iceland and Norway — align themselves with this statement.

The European Union very reluctantly joined the consensus in the Fifth Committee on draft resolution II, contained in report A/53/464/Add.5. In our view, it does not measure up to resolution A/53/36 A, in which the General Assembly previously dealt with requests for exemption under Article 19 not duly considered by the Committee on Contributions. At that time, after long and arduous negotiations, the Assembly decided to call a special session of the Committee to consider representations from a number of Member States.

This decision reflected a delicate balance of opinion in the Fifth Committee. Its strength was adherence — also in practice — to the principle laid down in rule 160 of the rules of procedure. With the special session of the Committee on Contributions in February and with the Committee's report, we were convinced that the decision-making process for this question was back on track.

The European Union reiterates its strong commitment to procedures which allow the General Assembly to come to well-founded and well-substantiated decisions. Rule 160 of the rules of procedure is clearly among such procedures. It must be applied in a consistent manner, not least to ensure the equal treatment of Member States. We of course accept that the General Assembly has the right to take decisions in exercise of powers conferred upon it by the Charter in Article 19, notwithstanding the terms of rule 160. The fact remains, however, that by requesting and respecting the advice of a standing advisory body, such as the Committee on Contributions, the Assembly can be better informed when exercising those powers.

The reason why the European Union joined the consensus has very much to do with the fact that the resolution does, albeit imperfectly, keep the Committee on Contributions on board in the consideration of Georgia's request. It is the firm expectation of the European Union that the Committee will transmit its views to the General Assembly on the matter before the end of its fifty-third session. In any case, the General Assembly will have to reconsider Georgia's case at its fifty-fourth session. We regard this temporary exemption as an extraordinary, ad hoc measure and as establishing no new precedent.

During the next session of the General Assembly, in its consideration of the report of the Committee on Contributions in its entirety, the Fifth Committee will also have to review the procedural aspects of the consideration of requests for exemption under Article 19. That review must give firm guidance on how to deal with issues like the one now at hand and put an end to the use of ad hoc measures.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 170

Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/1025)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report (A/53/1025).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/241).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on those representatives wishing to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries members of the European Economic Area (EEA) — Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway — align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the decision to grant the Secretary-General an initial $200 million in commitment authority to meet the preliminary operating costs of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We now expect that the Secretariat will press ahead and make the best use of this authority.

At the same time, the European Union deeply regrets that the General Assembly was unable to make a decision on fully assessing the $200 million, as requested by the Secretary-General. We have serious concerns about how this might affect the ability of the Mission to properly carry out its mandate. We are also concerned about the possible adverse effects of our decision on the start-up and initial running of new and expanded peacekeeping missions, as it might lead to a shortage of funds available in the peacekeeping reserve fund in the near future. Furthermore, the decision will most probably lead to a further and very unfortunate suspension of reimbursements to troop-contributing countries.

In the Fifth Committee, the European Union advocated the only sound and fair solution: the full assessment of the amount requested by the Secretary-General. We noted time and again that, in the light of the mandate of the Mission, its size and *sui generis* nature, and because of time pressure, the Secretariat really had no choice but to present its best estimate for the resources needed. A full set of details was simply not yet available. Given the complexity and undoubted importance of UNMIK, the European Union's priority was to ensure that the Mission be provided with sufficient cash resources from the very outset.

The European Union accepted the lower figure of $125 million for assessment merely to preserve consensus on the financing of this very important mission. That figure is not based on substance, or on a thorough consideration of the needs of UNMIK. It is a political figure, pure and simple. Should UNMIK now have difficulties in fulfilling its mandate pending the adoption of its budget and the next assessment, the General Assembly would bear the responsibility. In this context, the European Union calls upon Member States to pay their assessed contributions to the UNMIK budget in full and without delay.

The European Union looks forward to the presentation of a full budget for UNMIK as early as possible. We realize that the final needs of the mission, which will be fully explained and substantiated, will rise substantially above the initial commitment authority and assessment figures approved today.

Mrs. Aragon (Philippines): In joining consensus on the adoption of this resolution, the Philippine delegation reaffirms its support for the establishment of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and expresses its solidarity with the people of Kosovo in their efforts to rebuild a society devastated by the events in the recent past.

We note that the amount of $200 million will only provide for the initial requirements of what will be a large and complex operation. We regret that detailed information and justification for the resources requested were not provided in the Secretary-General's report. While we appreciate the constraints on the Secretariat, this lack of information made it difficult for the Fifth Committee to assess the full amount. We look forward to the comprehensive report requested in paragraph 12, which will include the full budget estimates and other related information on the initial expenses of UNMIK.

We attach particular importance to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the resolution, by which the General Assembly emphasizes that all future and existing peacekeeping missions shall be given equal and non-discriminatory treatment in respect of financial and administrative arrangements and shall be provided with adequate resources for the effective and efficient discharge of their respective mandates. We therefore hope that the spirit of generosity that prevailed in the negotiation of this text will also prevail when the financing of other peacekeeping missions is considered, as well as that of other United Nations programmes, in particular those relating to the development needs of developing countries.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): The United States attaches great importance to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We believe that this funding resolution provides the critical monetary support for Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which lays out a concrete plan for ending the humanitarian tragedy in Kosovo.

In the light of this view, we were prepared to endorse the Secretary-General's full request for $200 million, both in commitment authority and for assessment to Member States. Regrettably, however, the initial funding amounts requested by the Secretary-General were rejected. In the spirit of compromise and consensus-building, we accepted the current resolution which, while authorizing the commitment authority requested by the Secretary-General, provides a lesser amount for assessment purposes. We support this resolution in the hope that it will provide sufficient funding to enable United Nations start-up operations in Kosovo.

Please allow me to note that, based on our confidence in the Secretary-General and his staff, we have accepted the Secretary-General's request without the usual detailed justification. Should the funding which this resolution provides prove insufficient for the start-up operations, we trust that the Fifth Committee will respond quickly to this challenge and expeditiously provide the necessary additional funds.

We understand that the Secretariat will prepare a full budget with justification for presentation to the General Assembly by the end of September or early October. We expect that the Fifth Committee will take action on an urgent basis once this budget is received, so that the continued development of this complex and unique mission is not jeopardized by inaction or delays on the part of any organ of the General Assembly. We look forward to reviewing the detailed United Nations budget for this important peacekeeping mission, as well as the comprehensive report on its financing which is also called for in this resolution.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to commend the tireless efforts of the Fifth Committee Chairman in bringing this resolution to a satisfactory conclusion, as well as to thank him for his able guidance throughout the year on the complex, technical and sometimes tedious work of the Fifth Committee.

Ms. Méndez (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Although Venezuela joined consensus on the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly, we wish to note our concern about the lack of precise information on the use and final purpose of these resources. We hope that this will be quickly rectified with a view to meeting the legitimate concerns of Member States on a matter of such great importance.

Mr. Estévez-López (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): The resolution that we have just adopted on agenda item 170 does not fall within the Organization's routine. In the first place, its purpose is to finance an operation that was in turn the result of an event whose origin raised many questions, some of them unprecedented in the field of international relations.

Secondly, the purpose of the expenditure, namely the establishment of a provisional administration intended virtually to take over the civil administration of a

territory or entity, raises other kinds of questions relating to the content, scope and viability of what the Organization undertakes in its peacekeeping activities.

Thirdly, the magnitude of the effort, and the risk that it might draw human and financial resources away from other United Nations activities, also make it unusual.

Fourthly, the size and characteristics of this new activity, conceived as a contribution to the maintenance of peace, raise renewed uncertainties about the timely provision of the financial means required for such operations. These uncertainties arise from a problem that is still very much with us, namely the delay in the payment of contributions agreed upon by Member States.

Finally, from the perspective of elementary principles of equity, the matter is closely bound up with the imperative that other areas of conflict, primarily in Africa, should receive a similar level of attention from Member States when a United Nations presence is required.

This is not the place to address these crucial issues, but neither can we ignore them. They form the backdrop to the resolution we have just adopted, and explain why, along with many other delegations, my delegation harbours some substantive doubts about the operation that is being financed.

What finally led us to support the draft resolution, despite our doubts, was our strong commitment to the principle that the United Nations, whenever it can alleviate human suffering and restore normalcy in the aftermath of conflict situations, should do so. We ourselves — though in a completely different context than that surrounding the matter under consideration — are benefiting from the presence of the United Nations in the form of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, which has played a fundamental role in the consolidation of our peace process. It is for that reason that we will act with resolve and a sense of responsibility whenever the United Nations has the opportunity to make a contribution to the cause of peace in other regions of the world.

We cannot conclude this brief statement without noting that the huge expense we are about to incur might possibly have been avoided. We do not say this to assign blame for the outbreak of the conflict that has led to the present situation, but to state what is obvious: any investment we decide collectively to make in order to avert conflicts or safeguard peace after a conflict has broken out is a financially wise decision. It is in this spirit that we would once again stress our support for this draft resolution.

Mr. Gallardo (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to express its support for the draft resolution adopted by the Fifth Committee and now by the General Assembly concerning the financing of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo.

We consider this mission to be of great importance and will not impede it in any way. However, as was made clear during informal discussions on this item, we believe that, with respect to the financing of peacekeeping operations, the United Nations system must differentiate between conflicts in which the parties have complied with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and gone through the Security Council, and those in which the parties have not respected the Charter or the Council, turning to it only when there is a need to bring about peace and security, which is a universal obligation. These financial responsibilities should be analysed.

My delegation notes also that the recent proliferation of peacekeeping operations is having an impact on small and poor States, which can incur budget imbalances that affect their economies. At the international level, the cost of those operations is reducing financing for development, international cooperation for development and even donations. The donor countries are warning that they will not be able to fulfil their obligations because of the high cost of peacekeeping operations, whose number continues to increase.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to state that this concern, stated in the Fifth Committee, will be expressed in the First Committee, the Security Council and wherever relevant, because otherwise Member States that comply with the Charter and respect the Security Council will be penalized unfairly.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 170.

Agenda item 30 *(continued)*

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Draft resolution (A/53/L.78)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has before it a draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.78 entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.78?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/242).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area — Norway — align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of draft resolution A/53/L.78 on the subject of the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements. This resolution completes the work which started last autumn during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. It takes into account and complements those decisions taken during the twentieth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, held in February 1999, and the seventeenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, held in May 1999.

The European Union would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly for his guidance in this matter, which led to the decision of the General Assembly on 14 April 1999 to appoint the Chairman of the Second Committee of the General Assembly, Ambassador Bagher Asadi, as Coordinator of the open-ended informal consultations on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements. Under the wise leadership and coordination of Ambassador Asadi, the highly interactive process of further consultations was carried out in May and June of this year. The resolution that has just been adopted was approved by consensus by all parties in the open-ended informal group on 28 June 1999.

The European Union would like to thank Ambassador Asadi for his tireless and skilful work on the landmark resolution we have just adopted. We would like also to extend our warmest thanks to everyone who participated in the process of negotiations. It was only the spirit of compromise and willingness to listen to each other's concerns that made it possible to arrive at a consensus on a subject which is not only of acute interest but also difficult and needs our special attention.

The European Union is sure that you, Mr. President, and all our colleagues here share the view that environment is one of those resources which we should use wisely and in a sustainable way for the benefit of our generation and those to come.

Ms. Drayton (Guyana): First of all, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and of my own Government, let me offer my sympathy to the royal family, the Government and the people of Morocco.

It is with great pleasure that the Group of 77 and China has joined the consensus on resolution A/53/L.78. The issues of environment and sustainable development have become ever more important for Governments in light of the various post-Rio conventions to which most of us are parties. In view of the increasing importance of environmental issues in the economic, social and trade arenas, the Group of 77 and China emphasizes that the multilateral institutions in these areas should be open, transparent and effective. That is why we are committed to their reform, strengthening and revitalization. We also hope that the provisions related to finance and transfer of technology in the various international agreements will be implemented without much more delay.

The Group of 77 and China would like to express its gratitude to you, Sir, for putting this resolution forward. We would also like to thank Ambassador Asadi of Iran for his excellent work in facilitating the negotiations on this text. I recall that when Ambassador Asadi assumed the responsibilities of facilitator he promised that he would have an agreed text before the end of July. He has kept his promise.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners for their cooperation during a prolonged and sometimes difficult negotiation and for the fairly harmonious spirit in which we finally reached consensus on this text. The Group of 77 and China offers its best wishes to the Executive Directors of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) as they move to implement the mandates given under the present resolution, as well as in their continuing implementation of those measures that fall under their purview. We look forward to a report on their activities later in the year.

Mr. Tchoulkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We hail the adoption of resolution A/53/L.78. The Russian Federation would like to thank you, Sir, as well as the chairman of the open-ended consultations, Ambassador Asadi, for the exemplary organization of the consultative process on this extremely important document and for the exceptionally well-thought-out and constructive approach to the preparation of a decision acceptable to all. I would also like to congratulate all the participants in the negotiations on the successful completion of our work.

Russia has attached and continues to attach great importance to the reform of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements. Therefore, from the very beginning we supported the active measures undertaken in this regard by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Habitat. These measures have already yielded positive results, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of these organizations. I would like to point out especially the role of the Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements led by the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Klaus Töpfer. His thoughtful input stimulated a most fruitful and creative discussion of this subject.

We would also like to thank all partners in the negotiations, who in working on the resolution adopted today showed great flexibility and absolute determination to reach a constructive compromise. We are convinced that this document will make it possible to achieve further progress towards improving the activities of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements for the benefit of all Member States. We eagerly await the next steps of the practical implementation of the mandate contained in the resolution adopted today.

Ms. Bergeron (United States of America): The United States believes this resolution marks yet another step forward in our efforts to improve programme quality and delivery in the field of environment and human settlements, and it is an important piece in the overall process of United Nations reform. It is a necessary statement from the General Assembly, endorsing continued efforts at streamlining and enhancing the efforts of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

The United States has also been pleased to note that these organizations have taken other appropriate steps within their respective mandates to improve coordination of their activities. We look forward to the implementation of this resolution and, particularly, to the establishment by the Secretary-General of an environmental management group for the enhancement of inter-agency coordination and the institution of an annual ministerial-level global forum focused on priority environmental-policy issues.

The United States would like to thank all actors involved in achieving this resolution, one adopted by consensus. This has not been an easy task. First we would like to thank the members of the Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements, its advisers, its secretariat and Mr. Klaus Töpfer, its chairman. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his ongoing efforts to implement his reform programme and you, Sir, for putting forward this resolution. Finally, we would like to thank our partners and Ambassador Asadi, who as chairman tirelessly led us through many long negotiating sessions leading to this moment.

In closing, the United States realizes that improving and strengthening the United Nations system in the field of environment and human settlements will be an ongoing process. We hope that the efforts will continue to focus on those areas where real efficiencies can be achieved.

Mr. Yoon (Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption of the resolution on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements.

Given the divergence of views when the report was initially submitted to the General Assembly last year, long and difficult negotiations to reach a consensus on the adoption of a resolution were anticipated. In this regard I would like to commend the excellent leadership of Ambassador Asadi, as coordinator.

The resolution we have just adopted represents an important milestone for setting a new course of action in the field of environment and human settlements. In view of the ever-deteriorating state of the global environment and human settlements and of the growing need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system in this area, my delegation believes that the resolution provides a solid basis for further action. The value of the resolution should not be underestimated, as it contains important elements to promote the reform and strengthening of United Nations activities in the field of environment and human settlements.

With regard to the reform of the United Nations Environment Programme and Habitat, the resolution does not contain all the elements originally expected. However, in our view, the decision to establish the environmental management group will be considered a major step towards improving coordination among agencies. Furthermore, my delegation also attaches importance to the institutions of the new ministerial forum, which will strengthen the governance mechanism of UNEP. These new institutional arrangements will transform and improve the current structure of the United Nations system of deliberations.

It should be stressed that United Nations reform, including reform in the field of environment and human settlements, is an ongoing process. Hence, the resolution marks the beginning of our determination to strengthen the role, capacity and effectiveness of the United Nations system, in particular in the field of environment and human settlements.

Finally, I expect fruitful discussions at the forthcoming fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly on the basis of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of this resolution. As a devoted member of the United Nations, the Republic of Korea will do its part to support the efficient implementation of this resolution.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus heard the last explanation of vote.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. Bagher Asadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran for having coordinated and conducted informal consultations on my behalf on this topic and for having achieved a consensus on the resolution.

Mr. Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Now that the Assembly has adopted the draft resolution contained in A/53/L.78, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements", which falls under agenda item 30 on United Nations reform, I would like to say a few words. First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for your personal trust, confidence and support, not only during my coordination of this report but also during the entire fifty-third session of the General Assembly, while I have held the chairmanship of the Second Committee. I thank you, Sir, for your support and confidence.

I am also grateful for the very kind words addressed to the Coordinator by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU), the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the representatives of the Russian Federation, the United States and the Republic of Korea. In fact, I should like to express my deep gratitude for the goodwill and excellent cooperation of all those colleagues who participated in the informal consultations, in May and throughout the month of June: the representatives of the Group of 77, the EU and the JUSCANZ group, as well as the representatives of active individual delegations. I should also like to express my appreciation to the representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in New York, Mr. Adnan Amin; the representative of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in New York, Mrs. Celik; and Ambassador Koech of Kenya.

I can say that the process of informal consultations was very interesting and instructive — at least for the Coordinator. I can say that it was fun, too. I believe that everybody enjoyed it; I do not know of anybody who left the final meeting with any hurt feelings. Everybody took something away from the discussions on the draft resolution. The Assembly may recall that on 15 April I promised to conduct this process with smiles and even, perhaps, with hearty laughter. If I complied with the self-imposed deadline, I suppose that I also complied with the obligation to generate some smiles.

I may venture to add that the process of informal consultations and, undoubtedly, the outcome — the resolution we have just adopted — represent a high degree of collective understanding and the concern shared by us all for United Nations activities in the field of the environment and human settlements, as well as for the institutional and policy-making requirements of those activities. The text of the resolution is a step forward in the direction of reform and reflects a balanced representation of all the major concerns of both

developing and developed countries. The next step is to move forward. If the General Assembly is judged to have acted with resolution on this resolution, then let us muster the necessary resolution for its implementation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 30.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.